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Point for discussion this month

SEZ - what should be the environmental policy?

(For private circulation only)

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Dear Readers,

The rivers, lakes and other bodies are filled with particular type of aquatic species as the water is enriched with nutrients discharged from surrounding settlements. The foam is clearly visible in the photograph indicating the efficiency of Sewage Treatment Plant on the bank of Mula river - a major river of Pune city. In his interview to CNN-IBN, Sandeep Joshi told that the nature is at work in correcting environmental aberrations caused by city discharges.

The other side of the statement is there is enough scope to improvise the existing sewage treatment systems and institutional mechanisms to maintain purity of rivers which vital resources for the poor communities downstream. This gave birth to a concept of Pollution Treatment Hospital (PTH) - sincerity and honesty is spelt in the name itself. Using this concept not only Yamuna or Ganga but many other polluted rivers can be restored with sparkling waters.

Private sector is a major wheel of progress which only needs proper navigation so that the environmental quality is not affected. The article on SEZ explains the necessity of industries with efforts minimizing their impacts on environment will lead to growth of regional and national economy.

SERI vows to work for the betterment of environment for global citizen. It's a huge task; many systems are working from global to local levels with their own understanding and pace for the cause. To contribute to these efforts SERI has announced a number of capacity building courses starting from June 2008, the details will be uploaded on the website in May 2008.

Thanking You,
Chief editor.

Article

SEZ: Regional Economy and Environmental Impressions

Special Economic Zones in India have become a matter of concern since a lot of farmers are losing their lands for establishing the industrial activities and productions. There is no doubt that India's economy is essentially agro-based and even today 70% of the population is dependent on agriculture and agro-based businesses. The strengthening of these large industrious sectors of primary production is yet to be done energetically on scientific basis as it needs subsidies time to time. With alarming suicides by farmers in recent past, one of the reasons could be the increased cost of energy and material inputs which are again supplied by industrial sector only.

The special economic zones are thought to be villains and may impede agricultural production. The basic principle of the economy is that unviable production activity has to be modified to make it profitable with available resources, techniques or try to find alternatives to make it productive. The farmers have to be convinced not to use costly chemical fertilizers or pesticides irrationally to maximize the production capacity. This inept approach boomerangs after some years of some respite and then input costs increase disproportionately and the product not having quality does not fetch good returns. We can say that the agriculture is essentially a primary food industry which caters the need of billions of people on this earth.

Unviable agricultural land activity leads to recession in food production and then the poor farm industrialists reel under the pressure of higher inputs of chemicals for higher outputs. No industrialist purchases such loss then why should farmer own such losses? Some of the farmers' families have wound up their agricultural activities near the fast growing urban centres. The price paid by urban developers is more attractive than the losses in farming activity. Hence, the sale of farmland near metro- and metropolitan cities is inevitable. The process of development is unidirectional to maximize the economic gains. Loss making activities are shed off in due course of time. That is what is happening in case of agriculture near the urban growth centres and the residents

flock the cities. Hence the prime agricultural land is being already devoured by urban development. Examples are many.

Industrial activities geared up with the formation of government's industrial development corporations in all states of India. For developing government sponsored industrial zones at every district place, the land acquired was prime agricultural land only. If the present ecological footprints, land degradation and regional economic growth are concerned, there is a lot of room for government sponsored industrial zones (GIZ) to improve on various aspects for the economic and ecological health of the region. All concerned can pay attention to these environmental and social damages caused by GIZ and evaluate them to make strategic action plans to reduce environmental impacts in future from those GIZ.

Special Economic Zones are nothing but the private manifestations of GIZ. If government machinery does not remain vigilant during construction and operational phases of SEZ, then they will have the same environmental impacts as GIZ are having presently. So, the in-depth study of GIZ and their pollution corolla will give an insight to minimize the impacts of SEZs. The corona of emissions from the industries in SEZ can be curtailed using clamps of acts, rules and regulations very stringently. Of course, development should not be at the cost of environment quality. But it can be ensured by vigilant activists, officials and professionals who will help in balancing the development with environment quality and social harmony. There is need of prudent leaders in all walks of life who will take initiatives for the sustainability without compromising the set goals of regional development.

It should not be a replica of the models executed at other places. To understand the basic resources of the region, one has to have Zoning Atlas for the region, so that the planners and decision makers can decide the direction of growth and corroborate the environmental restoration in that area. This will be in the interest of the society and nation. E-words have gathered good momentum in the beginning of 21st millennium so the economy and environment. Let's work for that.

- Sandeep Joshi

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Innovative ideas

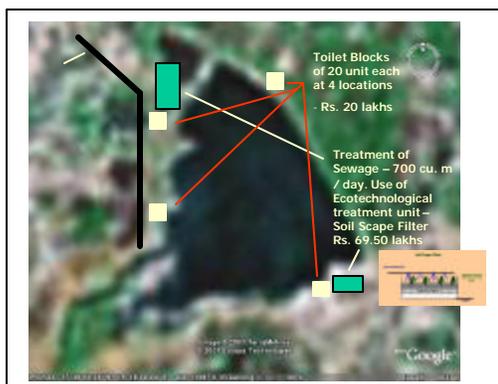
Pollution Control as CSR Activity

According to a survey of CSR spending, the Indian corporate sector spent about Rs. 30,000 crores on social expenditure during the last financial year about 1.7 times that of previous year. Most of the amount is spent on health related services. Even 10% of the expenditure for health can be spent on sanitation and pollution control which will improve the living conditions (environment quality of their surrounding) for poor villagers. In these attempt hybrid technologies – methane gas production plus ecotechnology shall be used to enable to overcome the problems of shortage of electricity. Nonetheless, this hybrid system can be easily maintained by unskilled and semiskilled personnel with proper training. This will give desired results of expenditure on CSR projects.

Control of River Pollution at Pilgrim Centres using Ecotechnology

Sandeep Joshi explained the need of changing the infrastructure based approach of development to ecology and environment quality for healthy life. He was addressing a group of engineers and scientists at The Institution of Engineers, Pune Local Chapter on the occasion of World Water Day organised by Indian Water Works Association (IWWA) on 25th March 2008. Other esteemed speakers were Dr. A. D. Patwardhan and Dr. B. A. Chopade who spoke on Water and sanitation, and Frontiers of Water Microbiology and Biotechnology respectively.

Padmavati Lake Restoration Scheme



Present situation of Indrayani river at Alandi



Sandeep Joshi presented his work on Indrayani River Restoration at Alandi and Dehu – pilgrim centres near Pune and Padmavati Lake Restoration at Pandharpur in Solapur District in South Maharashtra. He designed schemes for lotic and lentic waters using site specific modifications of ecotechnologies to reduce the pollution loads on the water bodies from the religious cities due to congregation of lakhs of people. Indrayani River Restoration scheme was approved by Group of Cabinet Ministers as a part of regional development programme and the Padmavati Lake Restoration scheme was approved and funded by Maharashtra State Ministry of Environment and Forests.

He suggested Vertical Eco-filtration – Soil Scape Filters to treat pollution from point sources and Green Lake systems to treat pollution from non-point sources along with innovative shoreline treatments using three tier plantation schemes.

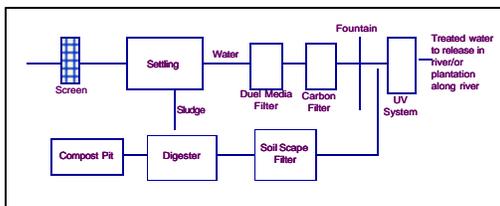
Dr. A. D. Patwardhan delivered scholarly talk on pollution of water based on the concentration of key parameters. He is well known environmental engineer in the field of pollution monitoring and control. He has written a book on industrial pollution control. Dr. B. A. Chopade gave detailed account on water microbiology and use microbes to control water pollution in his masterly speech.

All the speakers were felicitated by Mr. R. G. Holani, Chairman, IWWA, Pune Region. Mr. Vikas Kharge, IAS, Director GSDA introduced distinguished speakers and compering was done by Mr. S. G. Mande, General Secretary, IWWA.

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Pollution Treatment Hospital: A Novel Concept to address city pollution

It's an innovative concept formulated by Sandeep Joshi, Vinod Bodhankar and Narendra Chugh to have at least one demonstrable treatment of the pollution flowing through the natural streams or drains. This has a precedence of successful CME and Sandvik experiments based ecotechnology designed by Sandeep Joshi with sincere help of Clean River Committee's Probir Sinha and Vishvas Yevale. Their efforts were fervently supported by Col. Kenjalkar (now retired) in 2003.



Pollution Treatment Hospital (PTH) proposes to use proven anaerobic technologies and ecotechnologies in combination for low COD wastewaters to rip the benefits of methane gas production and use of natural powers as well to purify the water. Sandeep Joshi took up the designing of scheme with its cost benefit analysis while Vinod Bodhankar came forward to network the people those who seriously look for the sustained solution to pollution and Narendra Chugh vowed to support the demonstrable PTH scheme anywhere in Western India. Vinod Bodhankar can be contacted on email: parvatara@gmail.com.

Vision

Pollution free environment & habitat for the sustenance of humanity & life on the blue planet - Earth

Mission

Dedicated workforce toiling to alleviate pollution from the city's water resources

Action Plan

To demonstrate SAAT combination working successfully towards the set goal in eco-friendly manner and to alleviate water pollution problem using decentralized PTH in urban catchment areas of selected city

Announcement

Greenself, Greenmovement & Greentech capacity building programme

SERI has commenced greenself, greenmovement and greentech programmes for value addition training for undergraduates, graduates, professionals and industrial employees. These courses will equip the candidate with in-depth understanding of environment and eco-responsibilities in his or her profession. For more details please visit website: www.seriecotech.com or write to envedplm@yahoo.com.

Outreach Programme: Enviro-legal Services

Many industries, organisations, NGOs look for guidance and advice technico-legal matters of environmental monitoring and pollution control. Hence, SERI is in process to develop such outreach cell to help those who such services. This cell will guide organisations in activities to be undertaken as environment related CSR projects for the benefits of society. For more details please contact: Priya Kapole on seriworld@seriecotech.com.

Etternal Words

From Book "The Fontana History of The Environmental Sciences " by Peter J. Bowler (1992; Publisher Fontana Press, London)

"The emergence of the environmentalist or green movement with its emphasis on the use of science to pinpoint the problems of the modern world, suggest that, by itself, rationality is two-edged sword. One can apply the principle of rational investigation to support either an exploitative or conservationist of view of the environment. When we see people who call themselves 'scientists' speaking on both sides in debates over environmental issues, we are forced to confront the possibility that science must be something more than a value-free search for factual information. However, rational the scientific method, it is used to test hypotheses that are generated by human being living within a particular culture and society"

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